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ABSTRACT

The choice of U.S. colleges by foreign students studying for degrees full-time was examined. Responses were received from 1,065 students from 31 colleges. About 7 out of 10 of the students were male, 53.8% were undergraduates, and about 60% were self-supported. Almost half came from South or East Asia (49.2%), followed by Latin America (14%), Middle East (12%), Europe (11%), Africa (9%), North America (3.5%), and Oceania (1%). Findings include: 75% were satisfied with the schools they selected; for about 30% of the students, the costs of attending the school were higher than expected and recreational opportunities and relationships with professors and the community were somewhat disappointing; the main attraction of foreign study in the United States was the perceived high quality of education here; the most frequently used sources of information about U.S. schools were brochures and catalogs; other sources of information were friends, relatives, and government and private information agencies. Profiles for students from each geographic region include information on students' reasons for U.S. study, and applying to and selecting specific colleges. Appended are a list of participating colleges, instructions for administering the questionnaire on the campus, and the questionnaire. (SW)

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choosing schools from afar

The Selection of Colleges and Universities in the United States by Foreign Students

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Foreword

Students who go abroad to study are a unique group of people. For a variety of reasons, they leave their countries, their cultures, their families, and friends and travel, often halfway across the world, to live and go to school in another country. Often they find themselves in a confusing and unfamiliar place, where the language, customs, and everyday patterns of living are much different than those they are used to.

And yet they come and persevere; they learn and make new friends; and when they finish their formal education and get ready to go home, they often find that their learning has extended far beyond their schooling.

In a way, foreign students live at the interface of several worlds. In order to have a successful educational experience, they must immerse themselves in the culture of their chosen field and think of themselves, whether they are mathematicians or anthropologists or electrical engineers, as being part of a worldwide group of people held together by their choice of life's work. In addition, they need to retain their own cultural inheritance and at the same time become relatively comfortable living in a different culture. Above all, they need to develop a sense of personal identity, since that is what makes all of these diverse worlds coalesce for any given individual.

This is not an easy path, but it holds out great rewards for those who can traverse it successfully. Not the least of these are the membership they earn in a truly international community of scholars and the friendships, social and professional, that will continue throughout their lives.

All of this starts with the choice of country and school, and this study tells us something about how students make that choice. As might be expected, there is no simple answer to this kind of question. Students make such choices based on a combination of factors ranging from careful analysis of specific programs to consideration of proximity of friends or relatives. As our understanding of this complex process becomes greater, we should be able to provide more and better information to those students who choose to embark on this kind of intellectual journey.

Jules B. LaPidus
President
Council of Graduate Schools
in the United States

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This study was carried out by staff of the Institute of International Education under the guidance of the National Liaison Committee. Members of that committee reviewed the project at several stages and contributed valuable advice to the construction of the questionnaire and the writing up of the results.

Funding for the study was generously provided by the Office of Student Support Services of the U.S. Information Agency and by the College Board. Staff of USIA also made suggestions for the preparation of the report that were much appreciated.

Major Findings

1. The most impressive finding of the study is that a very large proportion of the respondents — three-quarters — are satisfied with the schools they selected. In most important respects, the schools meet their expectations. (See Tables 8 and 9.)

2. A substantial proportion of the respondents — about 30 percent — report that they find the costs of attending the school they selected to be higher than expected, and that they are in some degree disappointed by relationships with professors and with the community, as well as by the recreational opportunities available to them. (See Table 8.)

3. The principal attraction of foreign study in the United States is the perceived high quality of education here, and this concern about the quality of education and its eventual effect on career opportunities is also the key determinant in foreign students' applications to schools and choices of schools. (See Tables 1 and 1A.)

4. The information about U.S. institutions of higher education most frequently used by foreign students in their own countries is that put out by the schools in the form of brochures and catalogues. The students also frequently obtain information from friends, relatives, and government and private information agencies, and they are least disposed to obtain information from recruiting agents. The sources of information most often used also tend to be considered the most reliable. (See Tables 6A and 6C.)

Introduction

In 1983–84, there were 339,000 foreign students in U.S. institutions of higher education (see *Open Doors*), most of whom necessarily made two basic decisions: first, the decision to study in the United States instead of in another foreign country; second, the decision to study at a particular institution in the United States. It is the purpose of this research project to ascertain some of the factors influencing the decisions made by these foreign students and to identify the salience of different factors for subsets of the foreign student population.

Education abroad involves significant commitments of economic resources. For approximately two-thirds of the foreign students in the United States, it means large investments of personal or family resources; for the rest, it means the use of scarce funds at the disposal of public or private sponsoring agencies. Clearly, it is of great importance that these investments bring appropriate returns. Basically, this means that each student should acquire an education suitable to his or her talents and career opportunities and that sponsoring agencies should meet their objectives, be they the transfer of technology or the sharing of ideas and values across national boundaries. The student deciding to seek higher education in the United States instead of in another foreign country may be influenced by a variety of factors: educational, financial, professional, or personal. It would be desirable to know how these factors are weighted by and distributed among the foreign students who come to the United States.

Having decided to study in this country, all nonsponsored and at least some sponsored students must decide which institution or institutions of higher education to apply to. Of all the countries of the world, the United States offers by far the largest array of colleges and universities to those seeking postsecondary education.

These institutions vary enormously in academic quality, in cost, in the social atmosphere that exists on their campuses, and in their physical environments. College-bound American high school students face complicated choices, and the process by which they select specific institutions is not well understood. (See, for instance, Litten, L.H., "Different Strokes in the Applicant Pool," *Journal of Higher Education*, 1982, vol. 53, no. 4, pp. 383–402.) If the array of possibilities is not easy to cope with even for American students and the reasons for their choices are often elusive — to the institutions that are preferred or rejected, to the students' counselors, and often to the students themselves — the U.S. higher education scene is surely infinitely more bewildering to students from other countries, both graduate and under-

graduate. Many of them come from countries where the institutions in the system of higher education are quantitatively much more limited and qualitatively much more homogeneous. In many countries, private higher education is nonexistent, and one is either eligible to attend a university free of charge as the result of performing well in a series of competitive examinations or one is deprived of the opportunity for higher education. The exceedingly complex process of relating considerations of cost, quality (the student's academic abilities and the standards of an institution), special academic or career objectives, and location (urban versus rural, year-round warm climate versus cold winters, small town versus large city) is unfamiliar to most. We need to know more about how particular kinds of students deal with these multiple considerations.

All students, domestic and foreign, who are faced with the problem of selecting a U.S. college or university seek what they hope is authoritative information on which to base their choice. American students are likely to have available fairly abundant and reliable information. Prospective undergraduates in the United States have access to high school guidance counselors, college or university recruiters, alumni(ae), handbooks, and, in an increasing number of cases, the advice of parents or relatives who are college educated. In addition, they receive information via the mass media, especially about the athletic achievements of various universities. Prospective U.S. graduate students are generally guided by faculty of the undergraduate institutions they attend.

By contrast, for most foreign students and especially for undergraduates, the quantity and quality of available information is likely to be more scant, and they may therefore be significantly handicapped in making satisfactory choices. Not only are there fewer sources of information in their countries, but those sources may be of limited value. Further, good, reliable sources, governmental and private, may not be widely known or correctly perceived. U.S. universities, even those valuing an internationally heterogeneous student body and those suffering from a dearth of American students, are often reluctant to recruit overseas because they fear association with the unscrupulous recruiting that has been done on behalf of a small number of institutions. All of this means that foreign students, especially undergraduates, may be ill equipped to make important decisions, though ill equipped in varying degrees. It is our intention to find what information is deemed important by foreign students as a whole and by different subgroups of the foreign student population and how this information is obtained and assessed.

Methodology

Sampling

This study examines decisions about where to study made by sponsored and nonsponsored foreign students who are studying full-time toward an undergraduate or graduate degree in U.S. four-year colleges and universities.

A multistage, stratified cluster design was used to select the sample of students. In the first stage, the population of four-year colleges and universities was divided into 19 nonoverlapping groups or strata. The characteristics on which stratification was based are the geographic region of the United States in which schools are located (Northeast, Northcentral, South, and West); control (public or private); and type of institution (research university, doctorate-granting university, comprehensive university and college, liberal arts college, and other). For a complete list of the strata, see Tables A.1 and A.2.

Table A.1: List of Strata and Percent Return Rate by Stratum

Strata	Return Rate (%)
1. Northeast Research Universities I	18
2. Northeast Research Universities II	17
3. Northeast Doctorate-Granting Universities	19
4. Northeast Comprehensive Universities & Colleges	43
5. South Research Universities I	34
6. South Research Universities II	17
7. South Doctorate-Granting Universities	33
8. South Comprehensive Universities & Colleges	22
9. Northcentral Research Universities I	42
10. Northcentral Research Universities II	53

(continued on next page)

Table A.1: List of Strata and Percent Return Rate by Stratum
(Continued)

Strata	Return Rate (%)
11. Northcentral Doctorate-Granting Universities	37
12. Northcentral Comprehensive Universities & Colleges	52
13. West Research Universities I	36
14. West Research Universities II	45
15. West Doctorate-Granting Universities	43
16. West Comprehensive Universities & Colleges	34
17. Liberal Arts Colleges I	45
18. Liberal Arts Colleges II	31
19. Other (Professional Schools & Other Specialized Institutions)	24

Table A.2: Distribution of Foreign Students among Strata: Annual Census of Foreign Students, 1983–84, and Sample

Strata	Annual Census*	Sample
1. Northeast Research Universities I	6.9	3.8
2. Northeast Research Universities II	3.6	1.8
3. Northeast Doctorate-Granting Universities	2.5	1.3
4. Northeast Comprehensive Universities & Colleges	6.1	7.6
5. South Research Universities I	4.9	3.5
6. South Research Universities II	7.2	8.5
7. South Doctorate-Granting Universities	4.9	4.6
8. South Comprehensive Universities & Colleges	10.6	6.9
9. Northcentral Research Universities I	7.5	9.0
10. Northcentral Research Universities II	3.7	5.7
11. Northcentral Doctorate-Granting Universities	5.8	6.2
12. Northcentral Comprehensive Universities & Colleges	5.2	7.8
13. West Research Universities I	7.5	7.8
14. West Research Universities II	1.7	2.3
15. West Doctorate-Granting Universities	3.3	4.0
16. West Comprehensive Universities & Colleges	8.1	7.9
17. Liberal Arts Colleges I	1.4	2.5
18. Liberal Arts Colleges II	3.6	4.8
19. Other (Professional Schools & Other Specialized Institutions)	5.5	3.7
Unknown		.3
Total	100.0	100.0
N	338,890	1,065

* *Open Doors 1983/84*

After the schools were stratified, institutions from each stratum were selected for the sample. In order to ensure that all schools, regardless of their size, had equal chances of being selected and therewith to avoid a biased sample, a sampling method was used in which schools were chosen with probability proportional to the size of their foreign student population (PPS). Then, within each stratum, the same number of foreign students was chosen randomly from each of the selected schools. Using these procedures, a sample of 2,940 students attending 33 U.S. four-year colleges and universities was drawn. (See Appendix 2 for the list of schools surveyed.)

Because of the confidentiality requirements of colleges and universities, it was not possible for the researchers themselves to select a random sample of foreign students from each institution. Instead, questionnaires were sent to the appropriate campus officials with very specific instructions as to how they should draw random samples from their school's foreign student population. (See Appendix 3 for the instructions and Appendix 4 for the questionnaire.)

Data Characteristics

Of the 33 institutions in the sample, only three did not cooperate, and they were replaced with others from the same stratum that closely matched them in terms of such key characteristics as the total number of students and the number of foreign students. After mail and telephone follow-ups, 1,065 students from 31 of the 33 schools responded to the survey. Responses came from all of the strata at rates ranging from 17 percent to 53 percent. (See Table A.1.)

A demographic profile of the responding students looks like this: approximately seven out of ten of them are male; over half (53.8 percent) are undergraduates; and approximately 60 percent are self-supported. Half of the students come from South or East Asia (49.2 percent), 14 percent from Latin America, 12 percent from the Middle East, 11 percent from Europe, 9 percent from Africa, 3.5 percent from North America, and 1 percent from Oceania. (See Table A.3.)

In order to generalize the findings of the survey to all full-time foreign students who attend four-year colleges and universities, the sample of respondents must be representative of the population. It must be representative with regard to the type of school attended and the geographic location of the school in the United States (i.e., with regard to stratum), as well as to the characteristics of the foreign students themselves (nationality, field of study, academic level, and sex). First, therefore, the sample of respondents was compared with the distribution of foreign students in different types of schools in different U.S. regions. Despite the differential response rate from various strata, the sample turned out to be fairly representative. As Table A.2 shows, the proportion of foreign student respondents in each of the 19 strata is similar to the proportion of all foreign students in four-year institutions in that stratum. Bias due to differential response rate is not, therefore, substantial.

Second, to test the representativeness of the sample in terms of the characteristics of the students, respondents' characteristics were compared with data on foreign students attending four-year institutions in 1983–84 (all for-

Table A.3: Comparison of Sample Respondent Characteristics with Characteristics of Foreign Students Reported on the Annual Census of Foreign Students, 1983–84

Characteristic	Sample	Census* (1983–84)	Weight
REGION OF ORIGIN			
Africa	8.8	12.3	1.3977
Europe	11.4	9.4	.8246
Latin America	13.9	15.5	1.1151
Middle East	11.9	17.9	1.5042
North America	3.5	4.6	1.3143
Oceania	1.1	1.2	1.0909
South and East Asia	49.2	39.9	.8110
SEX			
Male	71.7	70.6	
Female	28.3	29.4	
ACADEMIC LEVEL			
Bachelor's	52.3	52.8	
Graduate	46.1	39.6	
Other	1.5	7.5	
SOURCES OF SUPPORT			
Personal/Family	57.7	66.1	
Home Government	20.0	12.4	
Foreign Private Sponsor	2.8	10.0	
U.S. College or University	13.8	2.4	
Employment	.7	2.3	
U.S. Private Sponsor	.9	2.2	
U.S. Government	2.8	1.8	
FIELD OF STUDY			
Agriculture	4.5	2.5	
Business & Management	18.4	19.2	
Education	2.7	3.8	
Engineering	23.6	23.9	
Fine and Applied Arts	8.9	4.6	
Health Sciences	2.5	4.0	
Humanities	3.9	3.9	
Math & Computer Sciences	13.5	9.4	
Physical & Life Sciences	6.0	7.9	
Social Sciences	9.1	7.5	
Other	2.7	7.0	
Undeclared	1.3	6.2	
N	1,065	327,500	

* *Open Doors 1983/84*

eign students in the case of nationality) obtained from *Open Doors*. It should be noted that although the data in *Open Doors* include part-time as well as full-time students, the validity of the comparisons of the sample to the population should not be affected substantially because the proportion of part-time students in four-year institutions was very small in 1983–84 (7.3 percent).

In most respects, the sample and the population are very similar (Table A.3). However, there are some discrepancies. In the geographic origin category, Middle Eastern students are underrepresented in the sample by six percent, and South and East Asians are overrepresented by ten percent. To compensate for these discrepancies, the responses in this category were weighted. Thus, the response of each South and East Asian student counts for less than one and of each Middle Eastern student for more than one. Using this statistical technique, the unequal geographic representation problem was corrected. Sex and academic level were not weighted because the distributions of the sample and of the annual census population are quite similar. No compensation was made for the overrepresentation in the sample of sponsored students and the underrepresentation of those who are self-supported. Therefore, the results are slightly skewed in favor of the former. As comparisons of weighted and unweighted findings in the geographic origin category show, however, the differences are very slight and affect the validity of our findings and of our conclusions only minimally. Since the sample is fairly representative of foreign students attending different types of four-year colleges and universities in all regions of the United States, one may reasonably generalize the findings of this study to all foreign students attending such institutions. Generalizations to full-time students with the above characteristics may be made with the caveat mentioned earlier.

Analyses

Univariate statistics, i.e., frequencies, have been used to obtain distributions involving the entire sample. To obtain distributions concerning subpopulations and to test whether these subpopulations are significantly different from each other, we used two types of analyses. For some of the questions, we carried out crosstabulations and used chi^2 to test for significance. For other questions, crosstabulations are inappropriate, and we performed, therefore, one-way analysis of variance to test statistically whether the means of the subgroups are significantly different from each other. The tables presenting subgroup distributions are not included in this publication due to limitation of space but can be made available upon request.

It should be noted that because of the varying response rates on individual items of the questionnaire, the absolute number of students varies from one table to another.

Findings

In this section, we shall present the findings of the study. For each of the major questions of the survey, overall findings will be presented first, followed by comparisons of subgroups based on the region of origin of the students, their academic level, source of support, and gender. As noted previously, all results are weighted for geographic origin.

Why do individuals decide to obtain higher education in the United States rather than elsewhere?

The respondents' decisions to pursue higher education in the United States are usually influenced by a number of factors, rather than by a single one, some of which have greater salience or importance than others. We attempted to find out which factors play *any* role in the decision-making process of respondents (how many students consider particular factors at all, question 1) as well as the salience of particular factors (the students' most important reasons for coming to the United States, question 1A).

Foreign students come to the United States for higher education because they believe they can obtain the best education in their field here. Nearly three out of four students cite this as a reason for their decision to study in this country (Table 1), and one-third say it is their most important reason (Table 1A). For about one-fifth of the respondents, the second largest subgroup, the primary reason is receiving a fellowship to study in the United States (Table 1A).

Reasons that are also often reported are command of English (68 percent) and the availability of more information about institutions of higher education in the United States than about schools in other countries (63 percent). Other factors, mentioned by four out of ten students, are the prestige of a U.S. degree, the help they may be able to obtain from their compatriots already studying in the United States, and the positive things they have heard about the American way of life (Table 1). However, while these factors affect the decisions of substantial proportions of foreign students, they are not very salient. As Table 1A shows, they are primary reasons for very small percentages of students.

A number of respondents (38 percent) specify yet "other reasons" for coming to the United States (Table 1). These other reasons include a wish to learn more about U.S. culture, society, and way of life in general; the desire to be independent, to travel, to live in a new country, and, more generally, to

Table 1: Reasons For Foreign Students' Decision to Study in the United States Rather than in Another Country

	Reasons	Number of Students	%
A.	Best education in field	1,056	72.0
B.	Lower cost	1,054	12.9
C.	More information	1,054	63.0
D.	Scholarship	1,061	35.4
E.	Exchange agreement	1,056	17.1
F.	Prestige of U.S. degree	1,051	41.5
G.	Less complicated selection procedures	1,053	34.9
H.	Rejected elsewhere	1,057	3.4
I.	Most compatriots go to United States	1,057	43.0
J.	Parents/relatives went to U.S. schools	1,056	23.2
K.	Friends or relatives in United States	1,058	39.2
L.	Speak English	1,057	68.4
M.	Attraction to U.S. way of life	1,056	40.4
N.	Other reasons	409	76.8

Table 1A: The Most Important Reason for Foreign Students' Decision to Study in the United States

	Reasons	%
A.	Best education in field	35.0
B.	Lower cost	1.6
C.	More information	4.5
D.	Scholarship	19.1
E.	Exchange agreement	2.4
F.	Prestige of U.S. degree	6.8
G.	Less complicated selection procedures	1.4
H.	Rejected elsewhere	.8
I.	Most compatriots go to United States	2.6
J.	Parents/relatives went to U.S. schools	1.5
K.	Friends or relatives in United States	5.9
L.	Speak English	2.5
M.	Attraction to U.S. way of life	4.7
N.	Other reasons	11.2
	N of cases	1,004

have new experiences; a preference for the structure of the U.S. system of higher education (the wide choice of schools, the opportunity for a liberal arts education); the opportunity to learn English; the wish to accompany a spouse or parents; and the greater willingness of U.S. institutions to accept overseas credits.

No matter which world region they come from, students have at least some common salient reasons for coming to the United States to study. The perceived high quality of higher education in this country is the most important reason for the largest minority of students from all world regions (23 percent of Middle Easterners, 27 percent of Africans, 33 percent of Europeans, 36 percent of Canadians, 38 percent of Oceanians and South and East Asians, and 39 percent of Latin Americans).

Next to quality of education, receiving a fellowship is most often cited by students from all regions except for North America as their most important reason for deciding to study in the United States. About 22 percent of Oceanians and South and East Asians; 17 percent of Europeans, Latin Americans, and Middle Easterners; and 16 percent of Africans come primarily for this reason.

With regard to some other reasons of primary importance to substantial proportions of students, there is more variation by world region of origin. The American way of life is especially attractive to 10 percent of Africans and Europeans; 13 percent of Middle Easterners come primarily for the prestige of a degree from the United States; and another 10 percent come primarily because they have friends or relatives in this country.

Nearly a third of the Canadian students (31 percent) and relatively large proportions of students from Europe (17.2 percent), Africa (16 percent), and Latin America (12 percent) cite yet other reasons as being most important for deciding to pursue higher education in the United States. These include the wish to learn English and live in a country other than their own; the desire to experience life in the United States or to study with a particular professor; and the flexibility of the system of higher education in this country.

If one examines the reasons that contribute to the decisions of students from different regions to obtain higher education in this country, reasons that were not necessarily the most important ones, somewhat different patterns emerge. The two reasons cited most often by Africans, Europeans, and Middle Easterners are knowledge of the English language (69 percent, 69 percent, and 75 percent, respectively) and the perceived high quality of U.S. higher education (62 percent, 64 percent, and 71 percent, respectively). Availability of more information on U.S. institutions than on schools elsewhere ranks third among Africans and Europeans (52 percent and 48 percent, respectively), while the prestige associated with a degree from the United States ranks third among the Middle Easterners, influencing 62 percent of them. Latin American students most often report their greater familiarity with U.S. schools as a reason for coming (71 percent), followed by their belief in the high quality of higher education in this country (69 percent) and their ability to speak English (56 percent). The perception that in the United States they will obtain the best education in their field appears frequently among the reasons cited by students from Canada and Oceania, and South

and East Asia (61 percent and 77 percent, respectively). The ability to speak English (75 percent) and the availability of relatively abundant information on U.S. institutions (72 percent) also influence a vast majority of Asians.

Graduate students and undergraduates alike stress the high quality of U.S. higher education, but the former group is more affected by this factor. Graduate students are also more affected by the availability of fellowships. Undergraduates, by contrast, are more influenced by the possibility of help from friends and relatives who live in the United States, by the attractions of the American way of life, and by the relatively uncomplicated selection procedures in the United States.

Both sponsored and nonsponsored students cite the quality of U.S. higher education more frequently than any other factor as contributing to their decision to study here, but when it comes to assessing the most important factor, the availability of a fellowship is cited by 40 percent of sponsored students and the quality of education by 28.5 percent, while for 38 percent of nonsponsored students the quality of education is the leading primary reason. Turning this around, however, it may be surprising that for 60 percent of sponsored students the fellowships they have been offered are not the primary reason for their decision. Nonsponsored or self-supporting students are more concerned than sponsored students with the prestige of the institution they consider attending and with the availability of friends who can help them.

The data show that these potentially helpful friends and relatives in the United States matter more often to women than to men, while the perceived quality of a U.S. education and the prestige of a U.S. degree matter less often to women than to men. The lower the educational level of the students' fathers, the greater the likelihood that factors other than the quality of education — namely, the availability of financial aid or uncomplicated selection procedures — will assume greater importance in their decisions to come to the United States.

Why do foreign students apply to the school(s) that they do?

The emphasis on the quality of education that we find in decisions to study in the United States is evident also in choices of particular institutions of higher education, or "schools." Two-thirds of the respondents report that their application decisions are strongly influenced by the reputation of a particular school and/or of a particular department and the anticipated significance of that reputation for their eventual careers (Table 2A). Also important, but to a lesser extent, are the requirements of the department; degree requirements; the cost of tuition, room, and board; the likelihood of interaction between students and faculty; and the relevance of programs to the needs of the students' countries. By contrast, choices are least often affected by the availability of ESL programs, the size of the foreign student population in a particular institution, the likelihood of access to other students from their own countries, opportunities for on-campus entertainment, and the cost of travel to the school (Table 2A).

Table 2A: Importance of Selected Items of Information on Foreign Students' Application Decisions

Item of Information	LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	N
Cost				
Cost of travel to the school	48.9	36.1	15.0	1,055
Tuition and fees	18.3	26.3	55.4	1,057
Housing costs	17.2	36.0	46.7	1,057
Living costs	15.2	35.3	49.5	1,054
Availability of financial aid from the school	39.4	21.3	39.3	1,056
Opportunities for employment	41.8	30.2	28.0	1,055
Quality of the School				
Academic reputation of the school	3.3	31.9	64.7	1,055
Academic reputation of prospective department	4.5	24.4	71.0	1,056
Academic requirements of prospective department	8.7	35.6	55.7	1,054
Academic requirements of the school in general	12.4	44.5	43.0	1,053
Relevance of the program to the needs of the students' countries	14.2	31.0	54.8	1,053
Careers to which degree from that school can lead	8.0	28.3	63.7	1,051
Other School Characteristics				
Size of the school	40.3	46.8	12.8	1,059
Degree requirements	11.4	38.4	50.2	1,054
Availability of on-campus housing	33.3	34.6	32.1	1,053
Availability of adequate academic counseling	24.3	42.7	32.9	1,048
Interactions between students and professors	12.0	34.9	53.1	1,053
Interactions between American and foreign students	18.6	42.1	39.3	1,054
Availability of sufficient relevant electives	22.3	45.2	32.5	1,041
Opportunities for entertainment on campus	42.0	43.8	14.3	1,051
Availability of health services	19.9	36.5	43.6	1,052

(continued on next page)

Table 2A: Importance of Selected Items of Information on Foreign Students' Application Decisions *(Continued)*

Item of Information	LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	N
Foreign Student Characteristics				
Existence of sizeable group of foreign students	21.0	42.0	37.0	1,050
Availability of ESL program	49.3	32.3	18.5	936
Community Characteristics				
Size of community (urban, rural)	31.1	48.5	20.4	1,052
Climate	23.7	47.4	28.9	1,052
Availability of housing	15.6	35.6	48.8	1,039
Community services for foreign students	32.5	43.6	23.9	1 ,049
Access to persons from home country	36.8	40.2	23.0	1,049
Other	40.2	.9	5.9	117

Regardless of geographic origin, the perceived quality of the institution is the most important factor in making applications. However, Europeans seem to be less concerned with school quality than students from other regions are. Beyond that, there are other differences related to region of origin. Students from Africa, Oceania, and East and South Asia are more concerned than others about cost considerations, and those from Asia and the Middle East about degree requirements and interaction between students and faculty. Except for tuition cost, Europeans and Canadians seem to place less weight than other regional groups on all aspects of U.S. institutions examined as possibly relevant to application decisions.

In discussing the two subgroups based on academic level and sources of support with regard to applications to U.S. schools, it is necessary to keep in mind that undergraduates typically are nonsponsored, while a significant proportion of graduate students are sponsored. This illuminates at least some of the findings pertaining to these subgroups. Undergraduates are under more pressure than graduate students to select institutions in terms of cost considerations (travel to school, tuition and fees, housing and living costs). They are also more concerned about the academic requirements of the institution; the meaning of a degree from a particular school for their careers; the availability of counseling; and such matters peripheral to education as the opportunities for entertainment on campus, the nature and number of other foreign students at the institution, and the characteristics of the community in which the

institution is located. For graduate students, the academic reputation of particular departments is of greater importance than for undergraduates, as is the availability of financial support (presumably to those graduate students who are not sponsored).

If we focus briefly on differences between sponsored and nonsponsored students (rather than on differences by academic level), we find that, compared to sponsored ones, nonsponsored students emphasize the cost of their education and its likely career payoff but are less likely to consider institutions in terms of the likelihood that financial aid will be available to them, presumably because they have the necessary resources to pay for their education. Sponsored students are more likely than self-supported students to consider the relevance of their education for the needs of their countries and to be concerned about the availability of housing.

To the extent that foreign students wanted information about different aspects of U.S. institutions, did they obtain sufficient information?

Overall, the majority of foreign students (and in some cases a large majority) express satisfaction with the amount of information they are able to obtain about different aspects of U.S. higher education. Out of some 30 topics, there are only six about which a majority of foreign students wish they had obtained more information.

The highest level of satisfaction, expressed by 80 percent of the students, concerns information about the cost of tuition and fees. Almost as many receive the information they want about the cost of travel to a particular school. But only about half of the students say they had sufficient information about housing costs, living costs, and the availability of financial information, and as many as 60.4 percent wish they had more information about opportunities for employment at a particular school (Table 2B).

With regard to the quality of education at particular institutions, it appears to be somewhat easier to find out about the academic reputation of a school (51.9 percent are satisfied with the information they received) than about the quality of particular departments (only 42.4 percent are satisfied). Similarly, it is evidently somewhat easier to find out about the academic requirements of a particular institution than about those of a particular department (55.1 percent versus 42.2 percent). Over half of the students (55.8 percent) would wish to have more information about careers to which a degree from a particular school can lead (Table 2B).

Other kinds of information a majority of students consider to be inadequate concern opportunities for interaction with American students and faculty and the availability of community services for foreign students (Table 2B).

On many of the topics about which information is felt to be lacking, more information could readily be provided. But on some topics information is inevitably "soft"; the matter of which possible careers degrees from certain institutions lead to is rather elusive, as is the likelihood of interaction between foreign students and U.S. faculty and students.

TABLE 2B: Foreign Students' Evaluation of the Quantity of Information Received on Selected Aspects of U.S. Institutions of Higher Education

Item of Information	Received Enough Information	Wanted More Information	N
COST			
Cost of travel to the school	75.7	24.3	1,035
Tuition and fees	79.6	20.4	1,045
Housing costs	55.5	44.5	1,043
Living costs	48.0	52.0	1,041
Availability of financial aid from the school	49.0	51.0	1,026
Opportunities for employment	39.6	60.4	1,006
QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL			
Academic reputation of the school	51.9	48.1	1,044
Academic reputation of prospective department	42.4	57.6	1,040
Academic requirements of prospective department	55.1	44.9	1,037
Academic requirements of the school in general	63.9	36.1	1,034
Relevance of the program to the needs of the student's country	52.8	47.2	1,019
Careers to which a degree from that school can lead	44.2	55.8	1,023
OTHER SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS			
Size of the school	79.9	20.1	1,040
Degree requirements	64.1	35.9	1,032
Availability of on-campus housing	65.5	34.5	1,018
Availability of adequate academic counseling	48.1	51.9	1,018
Interactions between students and professors	38.4	61.6	1,028
Interactions between American and foreign students	40.3	59.7	1,020
Availability of sufficient relevant electives	48.1	51.9	1,009
Opportunities for entertainment on campus	55.1	44.9	1,016
Availability of health services	52.2	47.8	1,017
FOREIGN STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS			
Existence of sizeable group of foreign students	63.2	36.8	1,022

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2B: Foreign Students' Evaluation of the Quantity of Information Received on Selected Aspects of U.S. Institutions of Higher Education *(Continued)*

Item of Information	Received Enough Information	Wanted More Information	N
Availability of foreign student services	53.4	46.6	1,022
Availability of ESL program	65.3	34.7	906
COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS			
Size of community (urban, rural)	63.4	36.6	1,018
Climate	71.0	29.0	1,023
Availability of housing	48.9	51.1	1,005
Community services for foreign students	43.9	56.1	1,010
Access to persons from home country	55.5	44.5	1,004
OTHER	48.1	51.9	129

There are certain regional differences in access to information about U.S. institutions of higher education. Students from South and East Asia are least satisfied with the information they receive; students from Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East report less satisfaction than Europeans and North Americans. All are especially dissatisfied with the information they obtain regarding opportunities for employment; Africans and Asians would also like much more information about the availability of financial aid from schools and, along with Latin Americans, about community services for foreign students. Seven out of ten South and East Asians would like more information about the reputation of departments and the possible effects that studying in a particular school will have on their careers.

At last half of the undergraduates surveyed believe they receive insufficient information on topics they consider important, such as the reputation of institutions, the academic requirements, the relevance of programs to the needs of countries, and the implications of attending particular schools for their future careers. Graduate students are more satisfied with the information they receive on these topics; they may be more skillful in obtaining certain kinds of factual information and more aware that some kinds of information simply don't exist.

Interestingly, while there are no great differences between the assessments of sponsored and nonsponsored students about the sufficiency of their information, sponsored students do express a greater sense of lack of information than nonsponsored ones on a number of topics, including academic requirements and the availability of housing. This may reflect, in part, the fact that often the sponsor rather than the student makes application and placement decisions.

How do students rate the quality of the information they receive about different aspects of U.S. institutions and of the communities in which they are located?

Before considering responses to this question, it may be well to point out that it is not always easy for respondents to distinguish between the quantity of information they receive (question 2B) and the quality of information (question 2C), especially since they are asked whether the information is "excellent," "good," "fair," or "poor," rather than whether or not it is accurate or reliable. The fact that there is considerable correspondence between judgments of quantity and quality suggests that assessments of the adequacy of the amount of information may influence assessments of quality.

The predominant impression with regard to students' assessment of the quality of information they receive is that they are satisfied. Since the purpose of a study such as this one is, in considerable measure, to remedy deficiencies in the supply of information, we shall identify only those aspects of U.S. institutions about which foreign students want "better" information. Over half of the students want better information about living costs, the availability of financial aid, opportunities for employment, interaction with American faculty and students, and the availability of community services for foreign students (Table 2C).

Differences among students according to their regions of origin are similar to those found in connection with the availability of a sufficient quantity of information, except for the above-average satisfaction of Africans with the quality of information they receive on cost issues.

No important differences among subgroups of the respondent population are found when it is broken down by academic level, financial support, and gender.

What are some of the factors, in addition to information received, that influence decisions about where to apply?

Application decisions typically are affected by several factors. The encouragement of parents, relatives, and friends to apply to a particular school or schools is cited most often as an influence on the students; nearly half of the respondents report this factor. A little over a third of the respondents say they are influenced by the fact that their friends are attending or have attended particular institutions, but only 11 percent apply to a school simply because their parents or relatives went there. Overall, encouragement from employers does not emerge as an important factor, probably because most students are not yet employed at the time they apply (Table 3).

TABLE 2C: Foreign Students' Evaluation of the Quality of Information Received on Selected Aspects of U.S. Institutions of Higher Education

Item of Information	RATING Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	N
COST					
Cost of travel to the school	8.1	25.4	50.3	16.2	945
Tuition and fees	5.1	19.1	49.4	26.4	1,026
Housing costs	13.6	31.5	40.8	14.1	1,002
Living costs	15.9	37.2	35.9	3.4	1,006
Availability of financial aid from the school	24.7	31.9	32.1	11.3	940
Opportunities for employment	36.3	30.3	26.2	7.2	889
QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL					
Academic reputation of the school	11.1	30.4	42.4	16.1	1,009
Academic reputation of prospective department	15.1	31.1	39.4	14.4	989
Academic requirements of prospective department	10.6	29.0	44.0	16.4	1,008
Academic requirements of the school in general	6.9	29.6	48.2	15.3	1,018
Relevance of the program to the needs of the home country	16.5	33.4	36.8	13.3	897
Careers to which a degree from that school can lead	16.7	35.5	35.8	12.0	935
OTHER SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS					
Size of the school	5.8	20.8	51.8	21.6	1,019
Degree requirements	7.8	22.8	49.9	19.5	1,012
Availability of on-campus housing	14.1	26.3	42.3	17.4	1,001
Availability of adequate academic counseling	17.3	38.1	34.5	10.1	960
Interactions between students and professors	22.9	37.7	29.5	10.0	932
Interactions between American and foreign students	27.5	39.4	27.2	6.0	914
Availability of sufficient relevant electives	16.9	38.1	36.0	9.0	948
Opportunities for entertainment on campus	18.4	39.4	34.3	8.0	937
Availability of health services	14.8	33.3	38.9	12.9	966

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TABLE 2C: Foreign Students' Evaluation of the Quality of Information Received on Selected Aspects of U.S. Institutions of Higher Education *(Continued)*

Item of Information	RATING Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	N
FOREIGN STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS					
Existence of sizeable group of foreign students	14.8	32.9	40.9	11.3	958
Availability of ESL program	13.9	33.8	37.9	14.5	974
COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS					
Size of community (urban, rural)	11.1	28.6	44.5	15.6	979
Climate	7.5	26.3	44.3	21.9	987
Availability of housing	16.7	33.2	38.3	11.8	972
Community services for foreign students	26.8	35.7	31.4	6.1	912
Access to persons from home country	20.2	34.6	34.1	11.1	885
OTHER	36.9	17.6	29.4	16.0	119

TABLE 3: Factors Influencing Foreign Students' Application Decisions

		% Influenced	N
a.	Encouraged by employer	17.7	1,043
b.	Encouraged by parents or relatives	47.1	1,054
c.	Encouraged by friends	47.0	1,052
d.	Friends were attending or had attended school	34.7	1,050
e.	Parents or relatives had attended school	11.0	1,047
f.	Friends lived in the city	25.1	1,045
g.	Relatives lived in the city	18.9	1,052

The patterns of influence on the application decisions of subgroups of students are similar to the overall pattern. However, there are some differences among subgroups. Students from the Middle East are especially influenced by friends who attend or attended the school(s) or live near the school(s), and Europeans are more likely to be influenced by employers — and less likely to be influenced by parents, friends, and relatives — than are other subgroups. Undergraduates give more weight to personal considerations — that parents or relatives are alumni of a school or that friends or relatives live near the school — than do graduate students. And, not surprisingly, these personal factors play a greater role for nonsponsored students and women than for sponsored students and men. On the other hand, graduate and sponsored students, as well as men, are more affected by the encouragement of their employers.

What are the application patterns of foreign students?

What are the acceptance patterns?

Having obtained their information and having considered the positive and negative aspects of one or several institutions of higher education, people who want to study in the United States must then apply to the school or schools that seem most desirable. Decisions as to how many and which schools to apply to are very important; they not only affect the likelihood of acceptance and the relative satisfaction with the selected institution, but they may also have decisive effects on the students' futures.

Three-quarters of foreign students apply to more than one institution, and over one-quarter apply to five or more institutions (Table 4). Fifty-three percent are accepted by all the institutions to which they apply.

TABLE 4: Distribution of Foreign Students According to the Number of Institutions to which They Applied

Number of Schools	% of Students
One	26.7
Two	14.4
Three	19.8
Four	11.4
Five	8.6
More Than Five	19.1
N	1,036

TABLE 5: Distribution of Foreign Students According to the Number of Institutions that Accepted Them

Number of Schools	% of Students
One	39.0
Two	24.6
Three	19.5
Four	8.7
Five	3.5
More Than Five	4.8
N	1,038

Some regional differences in the number of applications may be noted. Europeans, North Americans, and Latin Americans often apply to only one school (39 percent, 35 percent, and 33 percent, respectively); Africans, Asians, and Middle Eastern students tend to apply to more than one school; the South and East Asians are most likely to apply to several schools. Indeed, this last group has the strongest disposition to make as many as six applications.

There are also regional differences in acceptances, the number of acceptances being directly related to the number of applications. This means that students from regions where multiple applications are the norm also wind up with more choices.

The application and acceptance rates of sponsored and nonsponsored students are similar. More women than men apply to only one institution, and as a consequence, more women are accepted by only one institution. This pattern does not, however, hold equally at different academic levels. Graduate students tend to make more applications than undergraduates but are not accepted by correspondingly more institutions.

From whom or what do students obtain the information they need?

Insofar as foreign students do obtain information about U.S. institutions of higher education, they obtain it from a number of different sources. The data show that it is a rare individual who bases his or her application decision solely on information received from a single source. The most frequently consulted sources are brochures and catalogues of particular institutions (Table 6A). These brochures and catalogues are used by three out of four prospective students, and about half of the students obtain at least some information from commercially published college guidebooks. Written materials are, however, only one kind of source of information. Almost two-thirds of the students (62.3 percent) consult friends who are studying in the United States at the time or who have done so in the past, and 40 percent seek advice from other friends and relatives, either those in their own country or those living in the United States. Admissions officers of particular schools provide information to almost half of the students (47.7 percent), possibly as a result of direct requests to the admissions offices for information (Table 6A).

TABLE 6A: Sources of Information of Foreign Students

	Sources of Information	% of Students Receiving Information	N
a.	High school teachers and counselors	22.6	237
b.	Friends who attend(ed) U.S. higher education institutions	62.3	649
c.	Parents or other relatives who attend(ed) U.S. higher education institutions	35.3	367
d.	Other friends or relatives in student's country	41.5	430
e.	Other friends or relatives in the United States	44.2	461
f.	Independent recruiting agent	17.8	185
g.	Commercial college guidebook	51.5	539
h.	Recruiting agent of a particular school	15.0	156
i.	Admissions officers of a particular school	47.7	495
j.	Brochures or catalogues of a particular school	75.4	786
k.	Persons affiliated with religious institutions	7.8	80
l.	Fulbright Commission	13.4	131
m.	U.S. Embassy (U.S. Information Service)	27.3	272
n.	American library in home country (Binational Center)	28.8	285
o.	Institute of International Education	15.2	151
p.	AMIDEAST	7.8	74
q.	Other	43.1	109

The various agencies of the U.S. Government — Fulbright Commissions, the U.S. Information Service, American libraries (Binational Centers) — are each used as sources of information by about 30 percent or less of the students (Table 6A). This low percentage is probably due, at least in part, to the facts that these agencies do not operate in all countries and that, even where they do operate, the availability of their services may not be known to all of those who want to study in the United States. Considering, however, that the populations served by these agencies overlap only to a limited extent, the actual proportion of students obtaining information from these sources, taken together, may well be greater than is reflected in our data. Least often consulted are people affiliated with religious institutions and recruiting agents (in the latter case, it makes little difference whether they are independent of or affiliated with universities). (See Table 6A.)

The salience of the various sources of information mentioned here varies in different regions of the world. Students from the Middle East report much more frequently than others that they depend for information on friends who are currently students or who have studied in particular schools. Indeed, those from the Middle East constitute the only group that does not report brochures and catalogues as the primary source of information.

Brochures and catalogues are the most often used sources of the other regional groups; however, fewer Africans (66 percent) and more Canadians (84 percent) than Europeans, Latin Americans, and South and East Asians (about 77 percent each) use them. In Third World regions, students avail themselves of the "American agencies" to an extent that is not, of course, necessary for Europeans and Canadians. Europeans, compared to other groups, are least dependent on parents or other relatives in their home countries.

Not surprisingly, undergraduates go to high school teachers, friends, and relatives for advice more frequently than do graduate students. They also receive information from recruiting agents more often than do graduate students. Male students and sponsored students tend to use impersonal sources of advice (public or private agencies) more often than female and nonsponsored students, while women and nonsponsored students use advice from friends and relatives more often.

What is the relative influence of the different sources of information?

In order better to understand the process through which individuals who want to study in the United States decide on a particular institution, it is important to examine not only which sources they consult, but also the weight they attach to the advice they receive from different sources.

By and large, the sources that are the most frequently consulted are also the ones to which the students attach the greatest importance. Those who consult parents, relatives, and friends who are familiar with U.S. higher education are strongly influenced by them, as are those who consult admissions officers and/or who have access to written materials (catalogues, brochures, and, to a lesser extent, commercially produced guidebooks (Table 6C)).

(Information obtained from admissions officers may consist largely of brochures and catalogues but may also include application forms or material on tuition, financial aid, or other items not included in the institution's publications.) For those obtaining information from the various agencies of the U.S. government (the embassy or the American library) and the Fulbright Commissions, the influence of the information they receive is almost as great as that received from parents and relatives, brochures and catalogues, and admissions officers. The influence of private agencies such as IIE is somewhat less, but not very much so. Finally, the sources least consulted (recruiting agents, people affiliated with religious institutions) also carry the least influence.

TABLE 6C: Perceived Level of Influence of Sources of Information on Foreign Students' Choice of Institution

		LEVEL OF INFLUENCE			
	Source of Information	Not Influential	Somewhat Influential	Very Influential	N
a.	High school teachers and counselors	33.5	40.5	26.0	227
b.	Friends who attend(ed) U.S. higher education institutions	12.7	52.1	34.2	631
c.	Parents or other relatives who attend(ed) U.S. higher education institutions	15.9	38.8	45.3	358
d.	Other friends or relatives in student's country	17.4	58.2	24.3	417
e.	Other friends or relatives in the United States	11.8	51.5	36.7	439
f.	Independent recruiting agent	41.8	37.4	20.9	182
g.	Commercial college guidebook	14.9	53.7	31.5	518
h.	Recruiting agent of a particular school	38.2	31.9	29.9	144
i.	Admissions officers of a particular school	11.8	54.8	33.4	476
j.	Brochures or catalogues of a particular school	7.2	54.0	38.8	755
k.	Persons affiliated with religious institutions	39.2	45.9	14.9	74
l.	Fulbright Commission	29.1	40.2	30.7	127
m.	U.S. Embassy (U.S. Information Service)	19.3	51.7	29.0	259
n.	American library in home country (Binational Center)	14.2	59.6	26.2	267
o.	Institute of International Education	26.1	45.8	28.2	142
p.	AMIDEAST	38.5	40.0	21.5	65
q.	Other	14.4	32.7	52.9	104

Although the level of influence most sources exert is similar for all regional groups, some differences exist. Europeans and Latin Americans are more strongly influenced by high school teachers and counselors, while Africans and Middle Easterners are least influenced by them. Europeans give more weight than other groups to the information received from the Fulbright Commission, from an American library (Binational Center) in their country, and from friends living in the United States.

Official sources such as the Fulbright Commission and Binational Center influence graduate students more than undergraduates, and so do friends who attend, or attended in the past, an institution in this country. The information provided by friends and relatives in the United States affects women more than men, while the information obtained from written materials affects men more.

How do students rate the information they receive from the various sources?

Overall, the respondents are satisfied with the information they obtain from various people, agencies, and other sources (Table 6D). This means, presumably, that when they eventually see the institution that has been described to them and become familiar with its various characteristics, they are not unpleasantly surprised. At least half of them judge the information they receive from most sources to be good or excellent. They are especially satisfied with the quality of the information they receive from brochures, catalogues, and admissions officers; from parents or relatives who are alumni of U.S. institutions of higher education; from friends who attend these institutions or who have done so in the past; and from other friends and relatives. More than half of those who consulted U.S. government agencies and IIE consider the information they obtained to be good or excellent. Recruiting

TABLE 6D: Foreign Students' Evaluation of Information Obtained from Specific Sources

Source of Information	RATING				
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	N
a. High school teachers and counselors	18.3	27.4	39.9	14.4	208
b. Friends who attend(ed) U.S. higher education institutions	6.2	29.4	49.6	14.8	629
c. Parents or other relatives who attend(ed) U.S. higher education institutions	6.7	27.5	47.0	18.8	345
d. Other friends or relatives in student's country	11.9	35.7	43.4	8.9	413
e. Other friends or relatives in the United States	8.1	28.1	48.2	15.7	434
f. Independent recruiting agent	26.4	36.5	31.4	5.7	159
g. Commercial college guidebook	9.7	34.9	44.2	11.2	516
h. Recruiting agent of a particular school	21.1	30.5	32.0	16.4	128
i. Admissions officers of a particular school	5.7	28.6	54.2	11.6	476
j. Brochures or catalogues of a particular school	2.9	28.5	56.5	12.1	758
k. Persons affiliated with religious institutions	15.9	33.3	34.8	15.9	69
l. Fulbright Commission	14.0	26.3	46.5	13.2	114
m. U.S. Embassy (U.S. Information Service)	10.4	36.3	43.4	10.0	251
n. American library in home country (Binational Center)	8.8	35.1	46.2	9.9	262
o. Institute of International Education	11.9	31.9	45.9	10.4	135
p. AMIDEAST	26.7	30.0	36.7	6.7	30
q. Other	3.8	22.9	45.7	27.6	105

agents come off less well, but with regard to recruiting agents of particular institutions, a caution is in order. The responses may reflect to a certain degree the inability of students to distinguish among admissions officers representing particular universities, recruiting agents, and staff members of private agencies.

Given a general level of satisfaction, students from Africa and the Middle East are overall less satisfied and Canadians more satisfied with the information they obtain than students from other regions. Africans, Latin Americans, and Canadians are more satisfied with information obtained from school literature (brochures and catalogues) than others, and Canadians and South and East Asians are especially happy with the information given by admissions officers. Students from Europe and Canada think more highly of the information they receive from U.S. agencies and from friends living in this country, and those from the Middle East and Africa rate the information they receive from high school teachers and from counselors lower than do students from other regions. Europeans and Latin Americans are less dissatisfied than other regional groups with information provided by recruiters associated with particular schools. Geographic origin appears to be the key factor in differences in the rating of information received. Subgroups based on academic level, source of support, and gender show no substantial differences.

What prevents students from obtaining information from various agencies?

We have established that while the credibility that is attached to the information provided by certain agencies is very high, the frequency with which they are used is relatively low. This makes it especially desirable to find out why the agencies are not used more frequently. The principal reason offered by prospective students for not seeking or obtaining information from Fulbright Commissions, American libraries (Binational Centers), IIE, or AMIDEAST is that they do not know that these agencies exist (Table 6E). Here it should be noted that the number of respondents in our survey does not permit us to analyze responses country by country, but, instead, we must compare region by region. Agencies like Fulbright Commissions, AMIDEAST, and IIE have offices in only a few countries, and their visibility is limited to those countries. In addition, foreign students seeking information may not always be clearly aware of the specific agency that is serving them. (In Mexico, for example, the IIE office is in the USIS building, and students may not be sure whether they are obtaining information from USIS or from IIE.) They generally **do** know that there is a U.S. embassy, but many (29 percent) do not know that it has the kind of information they need; alternatively, they do not use the embassy because they have sufficient information from other sources (25 percent). Twenty-two percent appear not to know there is an embassy (Table 6E).

A few regional differences should be reported here, but, as noted already, regional differences are generally less important than country differences. European, Asian, and African students are more aware of the existence of American libraries than are others, and students from Europe are much more

TABLE 6E: Major Reason for not Obtaining Information from Specific Agencies

Reason	Fulbright Commission	U.S. Embassy (U.S. Information Service)	American Library (Binational Center)	Institute of International Education	AMID-EAST
Did not know of its existence	74.5	21.6	56.0	71.7	87.1
Knew of its existence but it did not have offices in home country	3.8	5.0	8.4	6.2	3.5
Did not know it had the needed information	6.2	29.2	9.1	5.3	2.0
Geographic distance too great	1.5	8.3	4.1	3.0	.4
Had sufficient information from other sources	11.0	24.9	18.2	11.5	6.2
Sought information but did not receive any	1.0	5.4	1.7	1.5	—
Did not believe it would provide reliable information	1.8	4.5	1.9	.6	.5
Other reasons	.3	1.2	.5	.1	.3
N	728	579	582	711	743

likely to know about the existence of Fulbright Commissions than are others; students from the Middle East and Canada are less likely to know about the existence of U.S. embassies.

Why do foreign students decide to attend the first school they do as matriculated students?

Slightly over half of the students in the sample are able to choose among several U.S. schools by which they have been accepted. One-fourth apply to only one school, and 22 percent have no choice, either because their sponsoring agencies select their schools or because they are accepted by only one institution (Table 7).

TABLE 7: Reason for Foreign Students' Decision to Attend Particular U.S. Institutions of Higher Education: All Students

Reason	%
Applied to only one school	27.2
Accepted by only one school	10.5
Sponsoring agent decided	10.9
Preferred it to other schools	51.3
Number of cases	1,015

The reasons offered by those students who have an opportunity for choice reflect, at least to some degree, the reasons given for applying to particular schools. The primary reason is the reputation of the school in general and of a department in particular. Cost considerations are also important, as are parental and peer encouragement. Reasons that are infrequently cited have to do with better employment opportunities, employer encouragement, the presence of many foreign students, and extensive foreign student services (Tables 7A and 7B).

Additional or "other" reasons, not listed in the questionnaire, are reported as being influential by one in four of those with a choice of schools. Cited most often are the following reasons: the location of the school (in a large or small city; near the mountains or sea; in a particular region of the country); the wish to study with a particular professor; the availability of financial aid; the special relevance of the program offered; and the atmosphere of the school (small, friendly).

TABLE 7A: Reasons for Foreign Students' Preference of Particular Institutions: Students Accepted by Two or More Institutions

Reason	Proportion of Students	N
Encouraged by employer	10.8	575
Encouraged by parents/relatives	41.0	584
Encouraged by friends	46.2	578
Friends/relatives are alumni	29.8	583
Friends/relatives live in city	24.8	579
Lower cost	38.3	583
School had best reputation	52.4	578
Department had best reputation	50.3	575
Facilities had best reputation	33.2	573
Many foreign students	20.3	581
Good foreign student services	18.1	580
Better employment opportunities	11.0	575
Community characteristics were desirable	32.9	570
Other reasons	85.6	139

TABLE 7B: The Most Important Reason for Foreign Students' Preference of Particular Institutions: Students Accepted by Two or More Institutions

Most Important Reason	Proportion of Students
Employer encouragement	.8
Encouraged by parents/relatives	3.8
Encouraged by friends	3.5
Friends/relatives are alumni	4.8
Friends/relatives live in city	5.0
Lower cost	13.8
School had best reputation	21.9
Department had best reputation	20.0
Facilities had best reputation	1.9
Many foreign students	1.0
Good foreign student services	.4
Better employment opportunities	1.5
Community characteristics were desirable	4.6
Other reason	19.1
Number of cases	616

While reputation is important for students from all regional groups choosing an institution of higher education, Canadians and Middle Easterners are more concerned with the reputation of the school in general, and Canadians and Latin Americans with the reputation of a particular department, than are students from other areas. Africans and Latin Americans are strongly influenced by their parents, while Europeans' choices of schools depend less on the encouragement and advice of parents and friends. More students from Africa than from other regions partially base their decision of which school to attend on whether or not the school has a substantial foreign student population and, along with students from the Middle East, on influences from their friends.

Nonsponsored students, generally undergraduates, give greater weight to parental encouragement, cost factors, the existence of friends or relatives in the city where the school is, and possible employment outcomes than do sponsored students. Women more often than men base their choice on whether or not the school has a substantial number of foreign students, on the advice of their parents, and on access to friends and relatives. Employer encouragement plays a greater role in choices of graduate students than of undergraduates.

Do conditions at their first school meet foreign students' expectations?

The responses reveal that students are generally satisfied with the information about institutions that they obtain; therefore, it is not surprising that they also report that, in most respects, the institutions correspond to expectations (Table 8).

TABLE 8: Foreign Students' Ratings of Selected Characteristics of the First U.S. Institution of Higher Education They Attended Full-Time

Characteristic	STUDENTS' EVALUATION			
	Worse Than Expected	As Expected	Better Than Expected	N
Actual costs	31.7	62.3	6.3	989
Availability of housing	26.3	60.0	13.7	986
Level of academic requirements of department	17.4	67.9	14.7	990
Level of academic requirements of school	14.8	72.5	12.7	985
Availability of adequate facilities	19.7	50.2	30.2	991
Relevance of program to needs of the students' country	14.8	72.3	12.9	973
Availability of relevant electives	18.5	59.5	22.0	973
Rapport with professors	17.9	50.6	31.5	980
Rapport with U.S. students	29.7	49.9	20.3	973
Opportunities for entertainment	28.1	50.2	21.7	978
Access to persons from their country	13.9	65.5	20.6	974
Rapport with community members	27.3	61.8	10.8	969
Other community characteristics	25.0	62.6	12.4	943
Other reasons	64.3	20.0	15.7	70

Yet this is not true with regard to all the characteristics of the institution, some of which exceed expectations and some of which fall below them. About one-third of the students are pleasantly surprised by library and laboratory facilities and the extent of rapport they achieve with their professors. Also, about one-third find certain things worse than they expect: actual costs, availability of housing, rapport with American students, recreational opportunities, and rapport with community members.

It should be possible to provide foreign students with more reliable information about costs and housing, though there may be no way of avoiding entirely the problem that actual costs turn out to be higher than expected. With regard to some of the other disappointing characteristics, appropriate information may be even harder to produce.

How satisfied are foreign students with their first school in the United States?

In spite of certain disappointments, most of the respondents seem to have made the right choice of school. Thirty percent of them are very satisfied with the first U.S. college or university they attend full-time, and an additional 47 percent are satisfied. Only seven percent are very dissatisfied, with the remaining 16 percent reporting slight dissatisfaction (Table 9).

TABLE 9: Foreign Students' Level of Satisfaction with the First U.S. Institution of Higher Education They Attended Full-Time

Level of Satisfaction	% of Students
Very dissatisfied	7.0
Somewhat dissatisfied	16.3
Somewhat satisfied	47.0
Very satisfied	29.7
N	1,028

Although the level of satisfaction is generally high, some differences among subgroups do exist. Canadians report the greatest degree of satisfaction, followed by Africans. On the other hand, Europeans, Oceanians, and South and East Asians are somewhat less satisfied than the other groups. Sponsored students are slightly happier with their choices than are self-supported students.

Conclusions

The results of this study suggest that foreign students who decide to study in the United States and who select particular institutions of higher education in this country are, in the majority of instances, making decisions that turn out satisfactorily for them.

In undertaking the study, we anticipated that the combination of physical distance from the United States and the complexity of the U.S. higher education system would make it difficult for prospective foreign students to obtain desired information and to wind up in universities or colleges that correspond to their expectations. We found that for **most** foreign students the supply of information is adequate, both in quantity and quality, especially since they supplement the information available directly from institutions of higher education and from government and private agencies with reports on particular institutions from friends and/or relatives who are familiar with the institutions. Our study suggests that the majority of foreign students are resourceful in putting together information and successful in interpreting it in such a way that they are not disappointed by their choices.

Insofar as there are deficiencies in the adequacy of information as experienced by foreign students, these are certainly in part remediable. Some students do not, for example, consider available information on various kinds of costs, especially housing and living costs, adequate, and for a significant minority of students, actual costs come as an unpleasant surprise. More and better information about costs can and should be supplied. Yet it seems likely that actual costs will always, in some measure, exceed anticipated costs. It is not easy for foreign students to anticipate the many possible and attractive ways of spending money in the United States, be they purchasing health-related products they never knew existed or participating in recreational activities. A good many foreign students also wish they had more or better information about the academic quality of particular institutions and departments and about academic requirements. Here again, it may well be possible to make existing information available more widely. And here again, although there exist objective ratings of institutions and departments, it may be quite difficult to provide sufficiently specific information to prevent some discrepancies between expectations and actualities. Whatever the overall reputation of a school, there will be variation in the quality of departments; correspondingly, whatever the reputation of departments, the quality of their faculty will vary.

Less easily remediable are reported deficiencies in information about such matters as the relationships foreign students can expect to have with U.S.

faculty and students and about the usefulness of degrees from particular institutions for future careers. In principle, it is possible to provide more information about relationships with the U.S. faculty and students, but research would be required to do so. (Interestingly enough, quite a few foreign students were agreeably surprised by the extent of rapport they achieved with their faculty.) With regard to the relationship of degrees to future careers, what is being expressed by foreign students is probably as much a wish for assurance as information. They are faced with inevitable uncertainty and wish they could be reassured that their considerable investments of time and financial resources will pay off. Some effort to improve guidance may be desirable and possible, but it would have to be offered quite cautiously.

This study was designed to provide, if possible, some guidance to those who provide information to prospective foreign students. The results of the study do provide some useful insights. As noted earlier, they indicate areas in which the amount and quality of information might be increased. The study also shows that foreign students make sensible choices in their choice of information providers. This is most conspicuous in their wariness of recruiters. They rely to a large extent on written materials produced by particular institutions, on information from friends and relatives who have themselves had direct exposure to education in the United States, and on governmental and private agencies; in a majority of cases, they are satisfied with what they receive. To the extent that prospective foreign students do not avail themselves of assistance from governmental or private agencies, it is not that they do not trust these agencies, but that they do not know of their existence.

If it is desirable to increase the number of foreign students coming to the United States and to provide potential foreign students with access to information of good quality, two approaches would appear to be indicated: first, to publicize more effectively the sources of high-quality information, whether governmental or private, that do exist; second, to extend these services to countries where they currently have not been established. Especially in the cases of the Fulbright Commissions or foundations and the American libraries, which are established in a great many countries, lack of awareness of their existence suggests that an increased effort might be made to publicize the services they offer. In providing these services, it might be well for counselors to keep in mind the general resourcefulness of their clientele in putting together the information needed and to offer the kinds of information and guidance less easily obtained from other sources.

Appendix 1

REGIONAL PROFILES OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

African Students

1. *Reasons for studying in the United States*: For African students, the most frequently cited reasons for studying in the United States are the quality of education obtainable in this country, their command of English, and the amount of information availale to them about schools in the United States.

2. *Reasons for applying to specific institutions*: When African students apply to specific institutions, the following considerations are most important to them: the effects on their careers, the reputation of the institutions and of particular departments, the relevance of programs offered to the needs of their home countries, and the availability of housing.

About half of the African students report that they would have liked to have more information on these topics. Other matters about which the majority want more information are the availability of financial aid from particular institutions, the opportunities for employment, the community services available to foreign students, and the likelihood of interaction between American and foreign students. An additional factor most frequently cited by African students for applying to particular institutions in the United States is the encouragement they receive from parents and friends.

3. *Sources of information*: The sources of information about particular schools that are most frequently used by African students are the brochures and catalogues of schools, friends who are attending or have attended certain schools, and other friends and relatives living in the United States.

Among the sources consulted, the ones that most strongly influence the decisions of African students concerning the selection of institutions are brochures and catalogues, U.S. government agencies, college guidebooks, and friends and relatives. These same sources are also judged by the African students to provide the best information.

The principal reasons offered by African students for not using U.S. government and private agencies are that they do not know about their existence (and in the case of Fulbright Commissions, only one in fact exists in Africa) and that they have sufficient information from other sources (this second reason is offered by only a quite small percentage). Over half of African students do not know of the existence of American libraries.

4. *Reasons for selecting institutions*: Among those African students who are accepted by two or more U.S. institutions, the reasons cited most fre-

quently for preferring the first institution they attend are that friends encouraged them to go there, that the educational reputation of the institution and the department are high, and that parents and other relatives encouraged them. The most important reasons for them are the reputations of the institution and of a particular department.

5. *Satisfaction with the institution selected*: Overall, African students are predominantly satisfied with the institution they select. They find the cost of living and studying in the United States higher than they expected and are disappointed by the amount of interaction they have with community members and U.S. students. But they are pleasantly surprised by the amount of interaction with faculty and by the institution's laboratory and library facilities.

European Students

1. *Reasons for studying in the United States*: For European students, the three most frequently cited reasons for studying in the United States are their command of English, the availability of the best education in their field, and the amount of information they had about U.S. institutions (compared to information available about institutions in other countries).

2. *Reasons for applying to specific institutions*: In making application decisions, European students most often consider the reputation of an institution and of a department, as well as the cost of tuition and fees.

3. *Sources of information*: European students are most influenced in their decisions by the following sources of information: friends and relatives, either those connected with a particular institution or those living in the United States; admissions officers of particular schools; and the brochures and catalogues of schools. They rate the quality of information from these sources highly, as they also did the information from Fulbright Commissions and American libraries, which they use less frequently.

Among European students, one-half do not know of the existence of American libraries or Binational Commissions as a source of information.

4. *Reasons for selecting an institution*: For European students who are admitted to more than one institution, the most important reasons for selecting the first school they attend in the United States are the perceived quality of that school and of a particular department. These students also cite the lower cost of the school and community characteristics.

5. *Satisfaction with the institution selected*: European students are, by a considerable majority, satisfied with the schools they select but are somewhat disappointed by actual costs and by the availability of housing.

Latin American Students

1. *Reasons for studying in the United States*: Among the reasons for studying in the United States, the one most frequently cited by Latin American

students is that they have more information about U.S. higher education than about education in other countries. Next most frequently, they cite the quality of U.S. higher education and their command of English.

2. *Reasons for applying to specific institutions*: In deciding which institutions to apply to, Latin American students give the greatest weight to the following considerations: the reputation of an institution and of a particular department, the academic requirements of a department, and the likely effect attending a particular institution will have on their careers.

About half of the Latin American students would like more information about these matters, but most are satisfied with the quality of the information they receive.

Other matters about which over 35 percent of Latin American students would have liked more information are community services for foreign students, opportunities for employment, and the likelihood of interaction with American students and professors. The quality of information on these topics is judged to be relatively low, as is information about access to other persons from their own countries and about opportunities for on-campus entertainment.

Another influence on the decision of Latin American students to apply to particular institutions is the encouragement of parents and friends; this is cited most frequently. Mentioned next in frequency is having relatives in the city where an institution is.

3. *Sources of information*: Latin American students most frequently obtain information from brochures and catalogues from particular institutions, from friends who have attended or are attending these institutions, and from commercial college guidebooks.

The sources of information that most strongly influence their decision to attend particular institutions are the literature the institutions produce, the officers of the institution, and friends and relatives; to a lesser degree, U.S. private and government agencies are influential. The information that is most important is also rated as being of good quality.

A high percentage (82 percent) of Latin American students do not know about the existence of Fulbright Commissions as sources of information. While most of them do know about the existence of a U.S. embassy, they either have enough information from other sources so that they do not use the embassy (28.9 percent) or they do not know it has the kind of information they need (26.5 percent).

4. *Reasons for selecting institutions*: In the case of Latin American students who are admitted to several schools, their choice of the first U.S. school they attend is most often influenced by the quality of the school or of a particular department and by the fact that parents or other relatives have gone or are still there. The most important factor for Latin American students is the quality of the department.

5. *Satisfaction with the institution selected*: With the exception of costs, which the Latin American students find higher than they had expected, the institutions they choose conform to their expectations.

Middle Eastern Students

1. *Reasons for studying in the United States*: In explaining their reasons for studying in the United States, Middle Eastern students most frequently cite their command of English; the next most frequently cited reasons are the quality of education in the United States and the amount of information they had about schools in this country.

2. *Reasons for applying to specific institutions*: The factors that Middle Eastern students consider most important in deciding where to apply are the reputation of a school and department, the academic requirements, the likely effect on their future careers, and the rapport with professors.

Over half of the Middle Eastern students say that they would have liked more information on the aforementioned matters, but they are, in general, satisfied with the quality of the information they receive.

Other influences on the decisions of Middle Eastern students to apply to particular institutions are the encouragement of friends and parents and the fact that friends are attending or have attended the institutions.

3. *Sources of information*: The sources of information most frequently used by Middle Eastern students are parents and other relatives, brochures and catalogues published by particular schools, and other friends and relatives living in the United States. The greatest influence on these students is exerted by the following: officials (admissions officers) and literature (brochures, catalogues) from the institutions, friends and relatives, and commercial guidebooks. The information received from these sources is considered good, and the information received from AMIDEAST is rated most highly.

Middle Eastern students do not seek information from Fulbright Commissions because most of them do not know they exist. One-third of these students do not know the U.S. embassy exists, and about a quarter of them do not know it has the kind of information they need; another quarter has sufficient information from other sources.

4. *Reasons for selecting institution*: The reasons cited most often by Middle Eastern students who are accepted at more than one school for choosing the school they first attend in the United States are the reputation of the school and a department and the encouragement they receive from parents and friends. The most important reason is the reputation of the school.

5. *Satisfaction with institution selected*: Middle Eastern students are generally satisfied with the institutions they select, but they are not prepared for the cost of attending them and are disappointed by the amount of interaction with American students.

South and East Asian Students

1. *Reasons for studying in the United States*: The three reasons most frequently cited by South and East Asian students for coming to study in the United States are the quality of education in this country, their command of

English, and the availability of more information about U.S. institutions in other countries.

2. *Reasons for applying to specific institutions*: The Asian students consider the following factors important in deciding which institutions to apply to: the reputation of the schools and of departments and the likely effect on future careers.

Many of the Asian students wish they had more information on these matters, especially on the reputation of departments. A majority of them also want more information on the availability of housing and on community services for foreign students, as well as on the likely extent of their interaction with American students and faculty. Overall, the Asian students are satisfied with the quality of the information they receive, especially in the areas they consider important.

3. *Sources of information*: Students from South and East Asia most frequently obtain information about particular schools from brochures and catalogues published by the schools; also, they receive information from friends who are attending or have attended particular institutions in the United States and from other friends and relatives living there.

Brochures, catalogues, admissions officers, U.S. government and private agencies, friends, and relatives have the strongest effects on their enrollment decisions. The information these sources provide is judged to be good by a large number of Asian students.

Students from South and East Asia do not seek information from Fulbright Commissions because they (72.6 percent) do not know of their existence. While only 21.1 percent do not know of the existence of U.S. embassies, 29.7 percent do not know that the embassies have the kind of information they need, and 22 percent have received sufficient information from other sources and do not, therefore, try the appropriate embassies. Two-thirds of the students from South and East Asia do not know IIE exists.

4. *Reasons for selecting institution*: The most often cited factors influencing South and East Asian students who are admitted by more than one institution to choose the school they first attend in the United States are the reputation of the school and a particular department and the encouragement of parents and relatives. The most important factors are the reputations of the school and department.

5. *Satisfaction with institution selected*: Asians are generally satisfied with the choice they made. They find most conditions at their first school to be about what they had expected, but they are disappointed by the amount of interaction with community members.

Appendix 2

U.S. INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INCLUDED IN THE SAMPLE

University of Pennsylvania
Syracuse University
Northeastern University
CUNY-Staten Island
Pratt Institute
University of Maryland, College Park
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Oklahoma State University
Georgetown University
Georgia State University
University of Alabama, Birmingham
University of North Carolina, Charlotte
University of Texas, El Paso
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
University of Wisconsin, Madison
Iowa State University of Science and Technology
University of Illinois, Chicago Circle
Indiana State University
University of Wisconsin, Green Bay
West Illinois University
University of Colorado, Boulder
University of Southern California
Washington State University
Arizona State University
California State University, Fresno
Portland State University
Coe College
Wellesley College
St. Mary's Dominican College
Brigham Young University, Hawaii
Georgia Institute of Technology
Florida Institute of Technology
Southeastern University

Appendix 3

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS TO CAMPUS OFFICIALS FOR ADMINISTERING THE SURVEY

Under the sponsorship of the National Liaison Committee for Foreign Student Admissions, the Institute of International Education is conducting a survey of foreign students attending U.S. colleges and universities. The purpose of the survey is to find out how persons from foreign countries obtain information about U.S. institutions of higher education; what kinds of information they especially need; and how they go about making decisions about which schools to apply to and ultimately select. Our goal is to reduce the foreign students' disappointments and the waste of their resources, as well as to enable various agencies of government, private organizations, and colleges and universities to improve their information services. The study will, we hope, enable more foreign students to make appropriate selections and more institutions to attract appropriate foreign students.

To carry out this survey, we need your help; indeed, without your help, it is impossible for us to do so. We are asking for quite a lot of help, and we would not ask if we did not have some confidence that you share our concerns about trying to improve the match between the needs of foreign students and those of institutions of higher education. Below, we have spelled out as clearly as possible what we would like you to do. We shall be exceedingly grateful for your assistance.

Since we do not have access to the names and addresses of foreign students (and, indeed, as will be shown in further discussion below, our ignorance is vital to the protection of their anonymity), we need you to distribute the enclosed questionnaires to appropriate students in your school. More than that, since not all foreign students in your school will be surveyed, we need your help in selecting those that will. We need 110 of your foreign students to complete the questionnaire. These students should be (1) enrolled full-time during the spring 1984 semester or quarter (no part-time or ESL students should be selected); (2) if your school enrolls both undergraduates and graduate students, both should be included. If possible, it is desirable to exclude graduate students who studied in the United States as undergraduates.

In order not to compromise the scientific validity of our study, those to whom the questionnaire is sent should be selected randomly. This can be done in one of two ways.

1. If data on foreign students exist in a computer file *and* if the computer has a random number generator program, have the person who gets the information from the computer draw a random sample of 110 students who meet the criteria specified above.
2. If data on foreign students are not in a computer file or if the computer is not programmed to choose a random sample, the following procedure will serve the same end. Please use an alphabetical list of foreign students who meet the specified criteria. Using such a list, number all the names sequentially. Then, divide the total number of students on the list by 110. Let us call the number you obtain N. (If the division does not yield a round number, simply add to the numerator as many units as is necessary to produce such a round number. For example, if you have 698 foreign students and the sample is to be 100, add 2 to make N equal 7.)

Now you are ready to draw the sample. Select the student with number 4 as the first member of the sample; then add N to 4 to obtain the next one. (For example, if N is 7, the second student would be number 11.) Continue to add N to obtain all further students until the sample is completed. (Still using the example of N being 7, you would continue from number 11 to 18, 25, 32, etc.)

If following these instructions seems to you excessively complicated or time-consuming, let us know as soon as possible exactly how many students are on your list, and we shall be glad to do the necessary calculations for you. Time is of the essence, since we need to complete data collection this semester.

In addition to helping us draw a random sample of students, we need your assistance in disseminating the questionnaire. You will find in your package numbered questionnaires, prepaid envelopes in which the students are to return the questionnaires to IIE, and plain envelopes which may be useful in sending the questionnaires to the sample of students. Each student in the sample should, therefore, receive two items. Could you *keep a record of the number of the questionnaire each student receives*? We shall need this information for follow-up purposes, that is, to send follow-up letters to the students who do not respond. We shall be glad to reimburse you for any costs incurred in mailing the questionnaires to the students.

We believe that the procedure outlined above will prevent any risk to the anonymity of the students. Only you will know which students received the questionnaires; only we will know how they responded to them. At the appropriate time, we shall send you follow-up letters and the numbers of the missing questionnaires. Again, we will not know who the nonrespondents are.

Your assistance with our research will be immensely appreciated. We will, of course, share the results of the study with you, and we think these results will be of considerable interest to you as well as to many others. Nevertheless, we understand very well that we are asking for a good deal of help of very busy people, and we are very grateful for the time you are willing to commit to the study.

Do get in touch with us if you have any questions about either the purposes of the study or about the procedures.

With best regards,

Sincerely,

Elinor G. Barber
Director of Research
(212) 883-8252

Marianthi Zikopoulos
Assistant Director of Research
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Appendix 4

QUESTIONNAIRE

The Selection of U.S. Colleges and Universities by Foreign Students

1. First, we would like to know all the reasons why you decided to study in the United States and not in another country. FOR EACH STATEMENT LISTED BELOW, CIRCLE THE NUMBER "1" IF THIS WAS A REASON FOR YOUR DECISION TO STUDY IN THE U.S.; CIRCLE THE NUMBER "2" IF THIS WAS NOT A REASON FOR YOUR DECISION TO STUDY IN THE U.S.

		Was a Reason	Was Not a Reason
a.	The best education in your field of study is available in the U.S.	1	2
b.	The cost of higher education is lower in the U.S. than elsewhere	1	2
c.	You had more information about U.S. schools than about schools in other countries	1	2
d.	You were offered a scholarship to study in the U.S.	1	2
e.	Your government or school has an education exchange agreement with the U.S.	1	2
f.	A degree from the U.S. is more prestigious than a degree from other countries	1	2
g.	The selection procedure in the U.S. is less complicated than elsewhere	1	2
h.	Your application was not accepted in another country	1	2
i.	Most people from your country who study abroad go to the U.S.	1	2
j.	Your parents or other relatives are graduates of U.S. schools	1	2
k.	You had friends or relatives in the U.S. who would help you	1	2
l.	You speak English better than other languages	1	2
m.	You were attracted to the American way of life	1	2
n.	Other reason (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____	1	2

1A. Which of these was the *most important reason* for your decision to study in the U.S.? PLEASE WRITE THE LETTER OF THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON BELOW.

Most important reason_____

2. Persons who want to attend an institution of higher education in the U.S. usually need information before deciding where to apply. The following list contains types of information often asked by prospective students. PLEASE READ THE ITEMS AND ANSWER QUESTIONS A, B, AND C FOR EACH.

	A. How important was each item in deciding where to apply? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH ITEM.			B. For each item, indicate whether you got *enough* information, or whether you would have wanted *more* information before applying. CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH ITEM.		C. Based on what you know now, how would you describe the information you received? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH ITEM.				
Item of Information	**Not important**	**Somewhat important**	**Very important**	**Got enough information**	**Wanted more**	**Poor**	**Fair**	**Good**	**Excellent**	**Got no information**
Cost										
Cost of travel to the school	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Tuition and fees	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Housing cost	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Living cost	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Availability of financial aid from the school	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Opportunities for employment	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Quality of the School										
Academic reputation of the school	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Academic reputation of your prospective department	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Academic requirements of your prospective department	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Academic requirements of the school in general	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Relevance of the program to the needs of your country	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8

Careers to which a degree from that school may lead	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Other School Characteristics										
Size of the school	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Degree requirements	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Availability of on-campus housing	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Availability of adequate academic counseling	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Interactions between students and professors	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Interactions between American and foreign students	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Availability of sufficient relevant electives	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Opportunities for entertainment on campus	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Availability of health services	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Foreign Student Characteristics										
Existence of sizeable group of foreign students	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Availability of foreign student services	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Availability of ESL program	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Community Characteristics										
Size of community (urban/rural)	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Climate	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Availability of housing	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Community services for foreign students	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Access to persons from your country	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	8

3. Sometimes decisions about where to apply are influenced not only by the information received, but by other factors as well. Which of the following were important in influencing your decision where to apply? FOR EACH STATEMENT BELOW, CIRCLE THE NUMBER "1" IF THIS INFLUENCED YOUR DECISION OF WHERE TO APPLY; CIRCLE THE NUMBER "2" IF IT DID NOT INFLUENCE YOUR DECISION.

	Influenced my decision	Did not influence my decision
a. Your employer encouraged you to go there . . .	1	2
b. Your parents or other relatives encouraged you to go there	1	2
c. Your friends encouraged you to go there	1	2
d. Your friends were attending or had attended that school.	1	2
e. Your parents or relatives had attended that school	1	2
f. Your friends lived in the city where the school is located.	1	2
g. Your relatives lived in the city where the school is located.	1	2

4. To how many different U.S. institutions of higher education did you apply?

One	1
Two	2
Three	3
Four	4
Five	5
More than five	6

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5. At how many were you accepted?

One	1
Two	2
Three	3
Four	4
Five	5
More than five	6

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6. Information about studying in an American institution of higher education can be obtained from a number of sources.
ANSWER QUESTION 6A ABOUT *ALL* THE SOURCES ON THE LIST.
ANSWER QUESTIONS 6B-6D ONLY FOR THOSE SOURCES TO WHICH YOU ANSWERED "2" IN QUESTION 6A.

	6A. From which of these sources did you obtain information? CIRCLE THE NUMBER "1" IF YOU DID NOT GET INFORMATION FROM THIS SOURCE. CIRCLE THE NUMBER "2" IF YOU DID GET INFORMATION FROM THIS SOURCE.	**6B.** What types of information did you get from each of the sources you consulted? CIRCLE AS MANY NUMBERS AS APPROPRIATE FOR EACH SOURCE CONSULTED.						**6C.** How influential was each source you consulted on your decision to attend the first school you did as a matriculated student? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH SOURCE CONSULTED.			**6D.** Based on what you know now, how would you rate the information you received? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH SOURCE CONSULTED.			
	Did not receive information	Received information	Financial information	School quality	Other school characteristics	Characteristics of foreign students	Community characteristics	Not influential	Somewhat influential	Very influential	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
a. High school teachers and counselors.....	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
b. Friends who attend(ed) U.S. higher education institutions.....	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
c. Parents or other relatives who attend(ed) U.S. higher education institutions.....	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4

d. Other friends or relatives living in your country ...	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
e. Other friends or relatives living in the U.S.	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
f. Independent recruiting agent	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
g. Commercial college guidebooks	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
h. Recruiting agent of a particular school	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
i. Admissions officers of a particular school	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
j. Brochures or catalogues of a particular school ...	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
k. Persons affiliated with religious institutions	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
l. Fulbright Commission ..	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
m. U.S. Embassy (U.S. Information Service) ...	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
n. American library in your country (Binational Center)	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
o. Institute of International Education	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
p. AMIDEST	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
q. Other(s) (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	4

ANSWER QUESTION 6E *ONLY* IF YOU ANSWERED "1" TO ANY ITEMS FROM "l" TO "p" IN QUESTION 6A.

6E. What is the MAJOR REASON for not obtaining information from this (these) source(s)? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH SOURCE FOR WHICH YOU CIRCLED "1" IN QUESTION 6A.

	Fulbright Commission	U.S. Embassy (U.S. Information Service)	American Library (Binational Center)	Institute of International Education	AMIDEAST
You did not know of its existence	1	1	1	1	1
You knew of its existence but it did not have offices in your country	2	2	2	2	2
You did not know it had the information you needed	3	3	3	3	3
Geographic distance prevented you from availing yourself of its services	4	4	4	4	4
You had sufficient information from other sources	5	5	5	5	5
You sought information but did not receive any	6	6	6	6	6
You did not believe it would provide reliable information	7	7	7	7	7
Other reason (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____	9	9	9	9	9

7. Why did you decide to go to the first school you attended as a matriculated student? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

It was the only school to which you had applied ..... 1 (SKIP TO QUESTION 8)

Of the schools to which you had applied, it was the only one that accepted you ..... 2 (SKIP TO QUESTION 8)

Your sponsoring agent decided you should go there ..... 3 (SKIP TO QUESTION 8)

You preferred it to other schools
that had accepted you ..... 4 (ANSWER QUESTIONS 7A & 7B)

7A. What reasons made you prefer this school to others: FOR EACH STATEMENT LISTED BELOW, CIRCLE THE NUMBER "1" IF THIS *WAS* A REASON WHY YOU PREFERRED THIS SCHOOL; CIRCLE THE NUMBER "2" IF THIS WAS *NOT* A REASON FOR YOUR PREFERRING THIS SCHOOL.

		Was a Reason	Was not a Reason
a.	Your employer encouraged you to go there.....	1	2
b.	Your parents or other relatives encouraged you to go there.....	1	2
c.	Your friends encouraged you to go there.....	1	2
d.	Your friends or relatives had attended or were attending that school.....	1	2
e.	Your friends or relatives lived in the city or town where the school is located	1	2
f.	The cost of attending the school was lower	1	2
g.	The school had the best overall reputation	1	2
h.	Your department had the best reputation.....	1	2
i.	The school facilities had the best reputation	1	2
j.	It had a substantial foreign student population	1	2
k.	It had extensive foreign student services.....	1	2
l.	Opportunities for employment were best in the city or town in which the school is located.....	1	2
m.	Other community characteristics were desirable ...	1	2
n.	Other reasons (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____ _____	1	2

7B. Which of these was the most important reason for your preferring this school? WRITE THE LETTER OF THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON BELOW.

Most important reason:_____

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8. Did conditions at the first school you attended as a matriculated (full-time) student conform to your expectations: Retroactively, how would you rate the following? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH CHARACTERISTIC.

		Worse Than Expected	As Expected	Better Than Expected
a.	Actual cost	1	2	3
b.	Availability of housing	1	2	3
c.	Level of academic requirements of your department	1	2	3
d.	Level of academic requirements of the school in general	1	2	3
e.	Availability of adequate facilities (labs, library, etc.)	1	2	3
f.	Relevance of the program to the needs of your country	1	2	3
g.	Availability of sufficient relevant courses in departments other than yours	1	2	3
h.	Rapport with professors	1	2	3
i.	Rapport with U.S. students	1	2	3
j.	Opportunities for entertainment on or off campus	1	2	3
k.	Access to persons from your country	1	2	3
l.	Rapport with community members	1	2	3
m.	Other community characteristics	1	2	3
n.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____ _____	1	2	3

9. Considering everything, how satisfied are (were) you with the first school you attended as a matriculated (full-time) student?

Very dissatisfied 1
Somewhat dissatisfied 2
Somewhat satisfied 3
Very satisfied 4

In order to be able to compare your answers with those of others we would like you to answer the following questions.

10. When were you born?
PLEASE WRITE YOUR YEAR OF BIRTH ON THE LINE_____

11. What is your sex? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

Male 1
Female 2

12. Which is your native country? PLEASE WRITE THE NAME OF YOUR COUNTRY ON THE LINE_____

13. Where in your country did you live most of your life? Did you live in . . . (CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.)

a small town or rural area 1
a regional or provincial center 2
a large city, but not the regional or provincial center 3
the capital city 4
elsewhere? (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____
_____5

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14. What is the highest level of education your parents completed? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR YOUR FATHER AND ONE NUMBER FOR YOUR MOTHER.

	Father	Mother
No formal schooling	1	1
Some elementary schooling	2	2
Completed elementary schooling	3	3
Attended or completed vocational-technical secondary school	4	4
Some academic secondary school	5	5
Completed academic secondary school	6	6
Attended or completed higher vocational-technical education	7	7
Attended or completed university level education (undergraduate or equivalent)	8	8
Attended or completed graduate or professional education	9	9

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15. What were the occupations of your parents at the time you were applying for entrance to institutions of higher education in the U.S.? (If your parents were dead, retired or unemployed at that time, provide information about their last job.) PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR YOUR FATHER AND ONE NUMBER FOR YOUR MOTHER.

	Father	Mother
Professional and Technical (e.g. accountants, engineers, physicians, nurses, social workers, teachers, actors, computer programmers, lawyers)	01	01
Managers and Administrators (e.g. treasurers, buyers, office managers, government officials, sales managers, restaurant managers)	02	02
Sales Workers (e.g. newsboys, real estate agents, retail sales clerks, manufacturers sales representatives)	03	03

	Father	Mother
Clerical workers (e.g. bank tellers, file clerks, mail carriers, dispatchers, office machine operators, secretaries)	04	04
Craftsmen (e.g. bakers, floor layers, foremen, machinists and repairmen, sheet metal workers, tailors)	05	05
Operatives (e.g. assemblers, produce graders, machine operators, sailors, textile operatives, bus drivers, taxicab drivers, deliverymen)	06	06
Laborers (e.g. fishermen and oystermen, garbage collectors, warehousemen, laborers, lumbermen, woodchoppers)	07	07
Farmers and farm managers	08	08
Farm laborers	09	09
Service workers (e.g. janitors, waiters, nursing aides, airline stewardesses, elevator operators, hairdressers, barbers, cooks, maids)	10	10
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____	11	11
NEVER WORKED (SKIP TO Q. 16)		

15B. Were they (CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH PARENT): . . .

	Father	Mother
employees of private company, business or individual, working for wages, salary or commission,	1	1
government employees, or	2	2
self-employed in own business or professional practice?	3	3

16. What is your present university status? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

Freshman	1	Ph.D. or professional school student	6
Sophomore	2	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____	
Junior	3	_____	7
Senior	4		
Masters student	5		

17. How long have you been at your present school as a matriculated (full-time) student, including this semester? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

One semester	1	Five semesters	5
Two semesters	2	Six semesters	6
Three semesters	3	Seven semesters	7
Four semesters	4	Eight semesters	8
		Nine or more semesters	9

18. What is the name of the first school you attended as a matriculated (full-time) student?

PLEASE WRITE THE NAME OF THE SCHOOL ON THE LINE_____

_____

19. Have you attended any schools in the U.S. other than the one you are now attending? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH LEVEL OF SCHOOLING.

	No	Yes
At the secondary level	1	2
At the undergraduate level	1	2
At the graduate level	1	2
For ESL study	1	2

20. What is your major field of study? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

Agriculture and Natural Resources	01
Architecture and Environmental Design	02
Area Studies	03
Biological Sciences	04
Business and Management	05
Communications	06
Computer and Information Sciences	07
Education	08
Engineering	09
Fine and Applied Arts	10
Foreign Languages	11
Health Professions	12
Home Economics	13
Law	14
Letters (Literature, Classics, Linguistics, Philosophy, Humanities)	15
Library Science	16
Mathematics	17
Military Sciences	18
Physical Sciences (Physics, Astronomy, Geology, Meteorology, etc.)	19
Psychology	20
Public Affairs and Services	21
Social Sciences	22
Theology	23
Undeclared	24
Double Major (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____	
_____	

21. What was your primary source of financial support during your first semester in a U.S. institution of higher education as a matriculated (full-time) student? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER.

Personal and/or family	1
Home government	2
U.S. college or university	3
Foreign private sponsor	4
Employment	5
U.S. Government (Fulbright)	6
U.S. Government (other agency)	7
U.S. private sponsor (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____	
_____	8
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)_____	
_____	9

THESE ARE ALL THE QUESTIONS WE HAVE.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP.

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